East Chicago
WATERWAY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

East Chicago Waterway Management District

2014 Communicator

This Communicator is being sent to property owners along the East Chicago waterway being assessed an annual user fee.

A Brief History

The East Chicago Waterway Management District (ECWMD) is a district created in 1994 in accordance with Indiana State law (I.C. 8-10-9) to, among other things, manage and supervise the industrial, commercial, and recreational development of the waterways in the City of East Chicago. ECWMD's boundary is formed by an imaginary line one-half (1/2) mile distant from the center line of any waterway in all directions. In 2010, the ECWMD began assessing user fees to accomplish its statutory purposes. For more information on the ECWMD, please visit our website at www.in.gov/ecwmd/

ECWMD's Mission

The ECWMD's Board of Directors formally adopted the following Mission Statement at its monthly public board meeting held September 18, 2013,

"The ECWMD Advances Economic and Recreational Use of the Waterways"

In our efforts to accomplish this mission, the ECWMD made the Army Corps of Engineers' navigational dredging project and the clean up of the canal its two marquee projects. The following is a brief summary of ECWMD's participation on the clean-up and dredging projects.

Clean-up Project

Decades of industrial and municipal discharges have contaminated sediments in the Grand Calumet River and Indiana Harbor Ship Canal. Past sediment testing has detected contaminants ranging from ammonia, arsenic, cyanide, E-coli, PCB's, oil and grease, lead and pesticides to name a few. The contamination of the waterways has disrupted economic development and recreational use for decades.

On June 19, 2013, the ECWMD Board of Directors approved an application/proposal to the EPA's Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) program to perform a Remedial Investigation (RI), Feasibility Study (FS) and Remedial Design (RD) for parts of the Grand Calumet River that have not been remediated and parts of the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal that the Army Corps of Engineers does not plan to dredge for navigational purposes.

The EPA approved the proposal and in December 2013, the ECWMD entered into a Contract/Project Agreement with the EPA to carry out the project which will be conducted in partnership with the EPA.

ECWMD hired Tetra Tech (TT) to provide the engineering and design oversight for the project. TT has extensive experience on similar projects along the Grand Calumet River with a great performance record with the EPA. We expect TT's unique advantage will result in a more cost effective and timely project.

Scope of Work and Cost – The current estimated project cost for the initial three phases is $2,000,000 – of which 65% or $1,300,000 will come from federal GLLA funds and the balance, 35% or $700,000 will come from the local sponsor/ECWMD. Primary funding for ECWMD's $700,000 (35%) share will come from collected annual user fees. The Legacy Act funding is a great opportunity to leverage local dollars for vital environmental projects, and in our case, will provide $1.3 million (65% of the total funding) to accomplish the RI, FS, and Remedial Design.

In summary, the Remedial Investigation will review existing site characterization data and perform additional necessary investigation efforts to effectively characterize the contamination, the Feasibility Study will evaluate all clean-up options and costs and choose the best/most cost effective remediation option which will be engineered/designed in the Remedial Design phase. At this point, the anticipated remediation design technologies to be screened include dredging with on-site disposal, dredging with off-site disposal, capping, and any combination of the three. The final design may include several variations of these technologies in different areas of the project area.

The project includes a process/task that engages community and stakeholder participation to assure the remedial design and final product has key stakeholder involvement. As the process suggests, you will have an opportunity to impact the final remediation design when we request your input.

Schedule – The completion of the 3 phases (RI, FS, and RD) is estimated to take 2 years.

Once the Remedial Design phase is complete, ECWMD plans to follow through with the next phase of Remediation (or clean-up), which is implementation of the Remedial Design.

Expected Long-term Benefits

After the remediation/clean-up is complete, some expected long term benefits include:

- A reduction of toxics released into the Lake Michigan
- A reduction of human and ecological risks
- Improved aquatic habitat
- Improved water quality
- Improved conditions for fish and wildlife
- Improved aesthetics – clean environmental conditions will allow wildlife to thrive – birds, fish, and vegetation.
- Increase opportunities for business development and recreational use.
    - Studies of similar projects indicate a potential return of investment in the range of 6 to 1, including increasing property values.
    - A clean canal/river will enhance recreational opportunities and use.

Navigational Dredging Project

Due to the contaminated sediment in the canal and a lack of a suitable disposal facility, the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal (IHSC) had not been dredged since 1972. The contaminated sediment in the canal is not suitable for open water disposal into Lake Michigan, nor is it suitable for unconfined upland disposal or beneficial use. The consequence of the inability to dredge for such a long period of time is a build up of sediment in the canal which impacts the efficiency of deep draft commercial shipping. To provide a suitable disposal site, the Army Corps of Engineers designed and constructed a Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) located in East Chicago with the current capacity to store up to 2.4 million cubic yards of dredged contaminated sediment from the IHSC.

Following the completion of the CDF construction in 2011, the Corps began dredging the IHSC in the fall of 2012 and additional dredging in 2013. To date, the Corps has dredged approximately 400,000 cubic yards of sediment. The dredging activities are scheduled to resume in the spring of 2014. The dredging project is designed to dredge and dispose of sediment in a way that is safe to human health, improves the environment, and is economically beneficial. The commercial benefit of the navigational dredging project will be a "deeper" canal enabling a more economical and cost effective means for deep draft commercial shipping through the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal. The navigational dredging will have fortuitous environmental benefits resulting from a cleaner canal which will be calculated in the RI, FS, and RD process.

The ECWMD serves as the local sponsor to companies and private owners to facilitate dredging of their docks and/or property by the Corps – costs affiliated with these dredging activities and storage in the CDF are paid by the company/private owners. The ECWMD also communicates with the Corps the concerns and issues voiced by the local community and stake holders related to the dredging and CDF construction/maintenance activities.

For additional information on the navigational dredging project, please visit the Corps' website at www.lrc.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorksProjects/IndianaHarbor.aspx

If you have any questions, concerns, or issues with the Dredging Project, CDF project/activities, or the clean-up efforts described above, or if you would like to learn more about the possibility of dredging material on or near your property, please contact Fernando M. Treviño, ECWMD Executive Director, at (mobile) 219-741-7714, or fmtconsulting@aol.com. You may also visit us at www.in.gov/ecwmd/.

Sincerely,

Fernando M. Treviño
ECWMD
Executive Director

John Fekete
ECWMD
President of the Board